

FY20 Budget Adjustment – Setting the Stage for Long-Term Improvement

Equity. Excellence. Empowerment.
August 14, 2019





Agenda

1. Overview of Revenue
2. Review of Major Themes from Listening and Learning
3. Core Beliefs and Fundamental Commitments
4. Theory of Action Underlying the Work
5. Year One Goals and Resource Needs
6. Key Budget Considerations
7. Budget Recommendation for Action



Setting the Stage for Long-Term Improvement

- On July 22, the legislature approved the final FY20 state budget. As a result, the district's total operational revenue will increase from the original forecast of \$188,908,028 to an actual allocation of \$192,528,145.
- Following a final cost analysis of all previously unfunded expenditures, **\$3,011,528 or \$207 per student** of unencumbered revenue remains available in the district's FY20 budget.
- Following a comprehensive analysis of our district's needs, the recommendation is to use these funds to set the stage for long-term improvement by investing in four district-wide goals for SY2019-2020:
 1. Improving academics and student achievement at every school site, including targeted and intensive support for chronically underperforming schools;
 2. Improving operational efficiency across the system, including increased equity and transparency in district-wide budgeting and school-based resource allocations;
 3. Ensuring that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, including the development of proactive security readiness protocols at every school site; and
 4. Increasing community engagement and empowering families as partners in the educational process, including improved access to school-based information for families of linguistically diverse backgrounds.



Themes from Listening and Learning

- We have extraordinary students and there are great things happening in all of our schools, but not all children are benefiting from the full range of opportunities at LPS.
- People throughout LPS are working extremely hard, but resource constraints and resource decisions have taken a toll on the level of support received by schools in critical areas.
- The district widely embraces equity as a core value, but it's unclear how the concept of equity has been considered in past resource and policy decisions.
- Lowell's diversity is our city's greatest asset, but the district's services are not structured in a way that makes them accessible by all families.
- Families of students, who are enrolled in LPS, are proud of our public schools, but the broader community is not fully aware of all of the great work that occurs in our classrooms each day.



Core Beliefs

A high quality education is a fundamental civil right of every child we serve.

Teaching and Learning are at the core of our work.
Everything we do must support what happens in the classroom.

Parents are our partners. They are our students' first teachers in the home.

There is no silver bullet to improving our schools.
Sustainable school improvement requires hard and steady work over time.

Every adult in the system is accountable for the success of our students. Putting every child on a path to college and career success is the responsibility of the entire community.



Our Fundamental Commitments

- Eliminate the racial, ethnic and linguistic achievement and opportunity gaps among all students.
- Provide equitable funding and resources among the district's diverse schools.
- Engage all families with courtesy, dignity, respect and cultural understanding.



A Working Theory of Action

Creating a pathway from the cradle to career success for every child

If we:

- Expand early learning opportunities from birth to age 5, through a coordination of services with community partners, ensuring that every child in Lowell is academically, emotionally and socially ready for kindergarten on Day 1;
- Increase access for all students to high performing seats through the continuous improvement of all schools, including an expansion of high demand programs and an intensive focus on turning around historically underperforming schools;
- Align the curriculum and secondary school programs with the expectations of colleges and the requirements of the future workforce; and
- Leverage the richness of Lowell's diversity by focusing all of our work on our fundamental commitment to equity,

Then:

- We can truly deliver on the inherent promise we make to each family who enrolls in our public schools by providing a high quality education to every child, and
- Ensure that all students – regardless of race, ethnicity, linguistic background or family income - graduate from high school ready to enter the college or career of his or her choice.



Year 1: Setting the stage for long-term, sustainable improvement

Goal 1: Improve academics and student achievement at every school site, including targeted and intensive support for chronically underperforming schools

Goal 2: Improve operational efficiency across the system, including increased equity and transparency in district-wide budgeting and school-based resource allocations

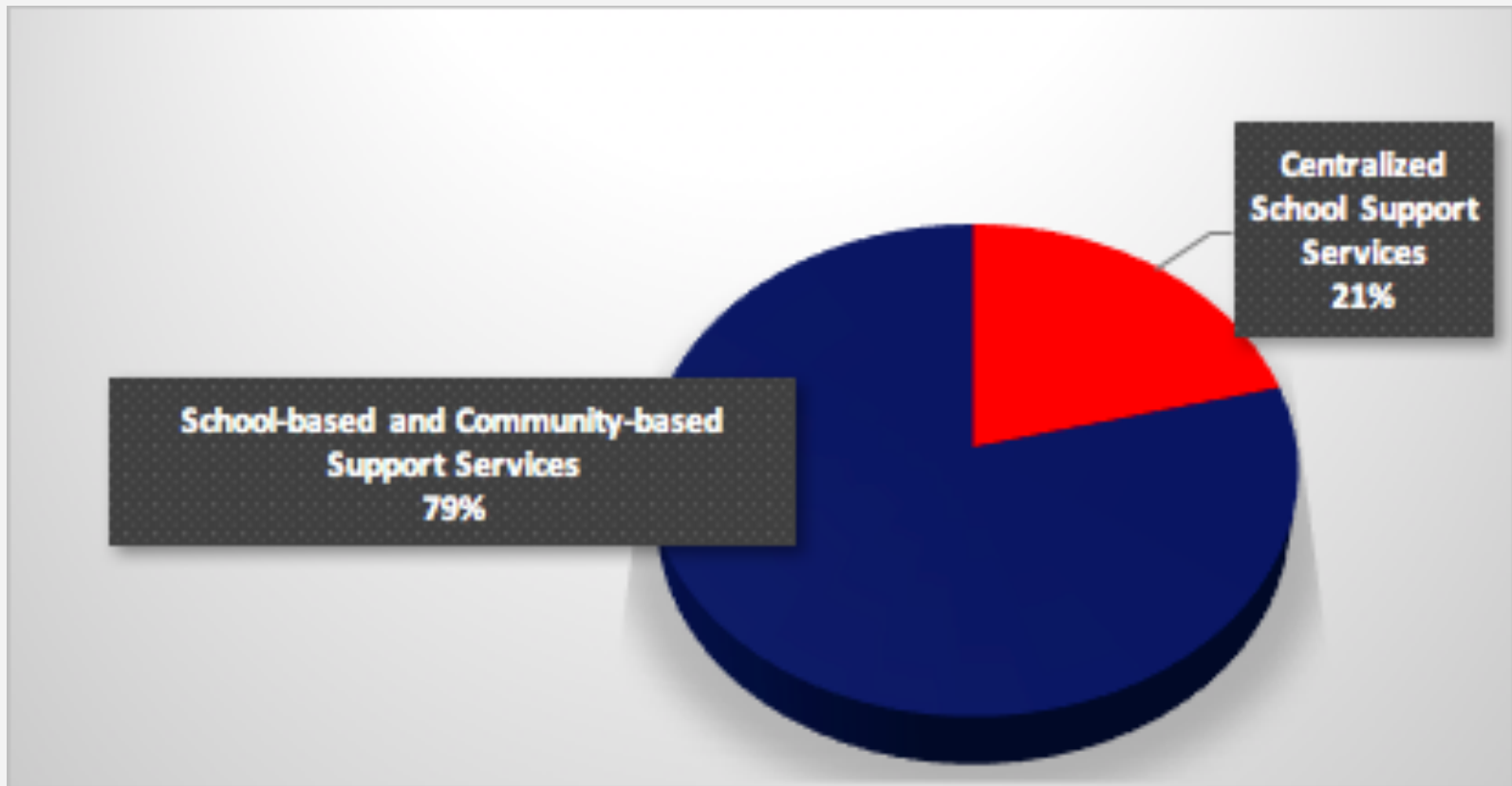
Goal 3: Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, including the development of proactive security readiness protocols at every school site

Goal 4: Increase community engagement and empowering families as partners in the educational process, including improved access to school-based information for families of linguistically diverse backgrounds



Setting the Stage for Long-Term Improvement

Budget Adjustment Resource Distribution





Goal 1: Improve academics and student achievement at every school site, including targeted and intensive support for chronically underperforming schools

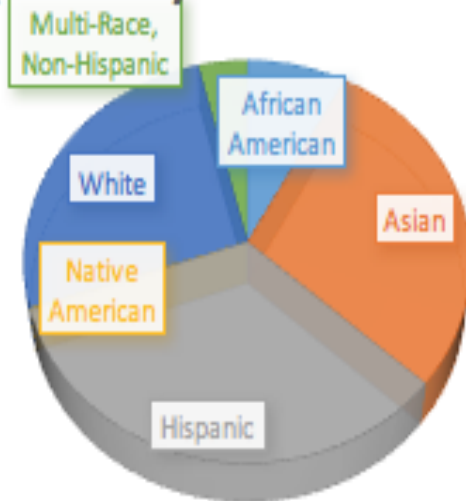
Recommended Allocation: \$1,949,528



Key Data by Student Demographics

- Over 14,500 students
- 72.4% high needs
- 53.8% economically disadvantaged
- 4 year adjusted graduation rates
 - All students 88%
 - EL 68.3%
 - SWD 50.8%
 - Low Inc 79.1%
 - High Needs 79.4%
 - AA 91.4%
 - Asian 92.2%
 - Hisp 73.2%
 - White 91.3%
 - Multi 90%

**ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY
(2018-19) % OF DISTRICT**





Site-Based Budgeting

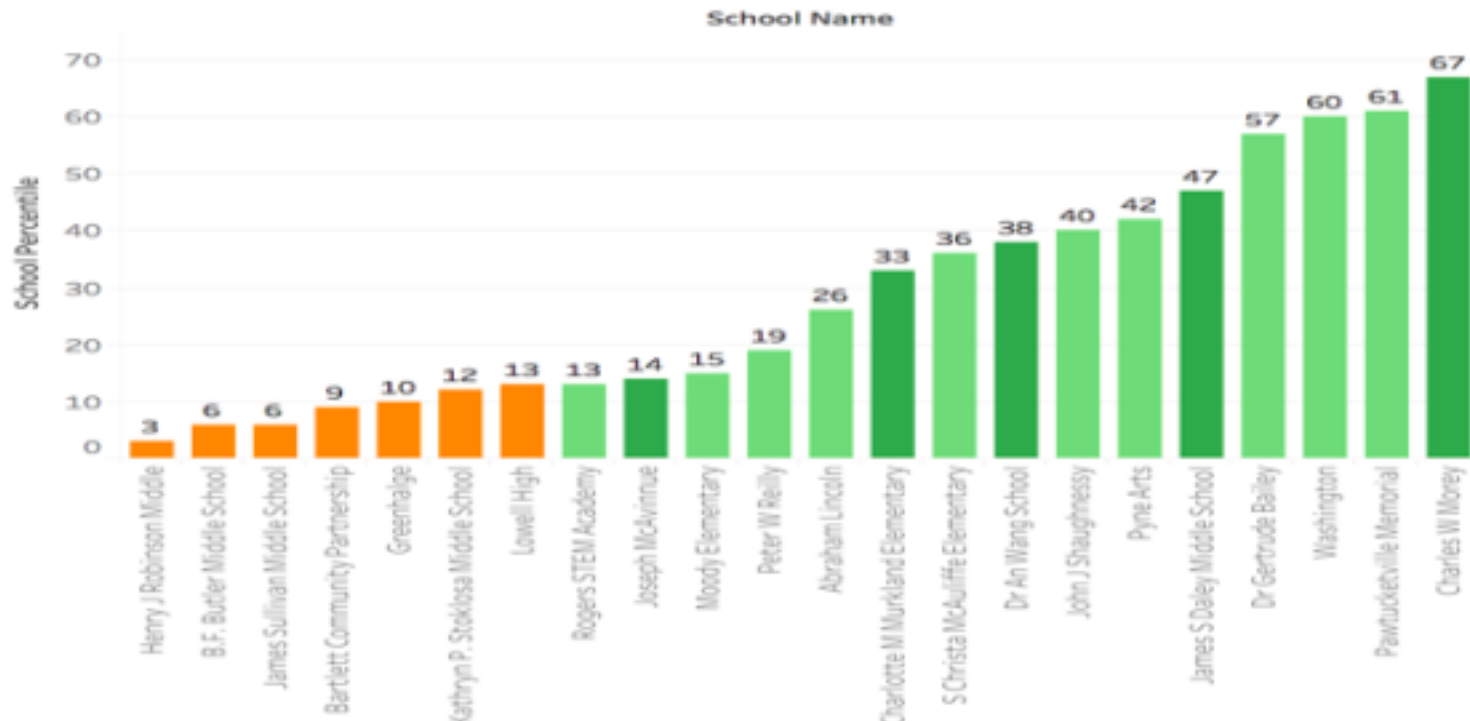
- SBB is a process in which budgetary authority is granted to the school.
- LPS has prioritized **\$1,263,728** of chapter 70 funding to allocate directly to schools.
- School-site councils will be expected to recommend how the dollars will best be used to address school priorities.
- The following are known priorities:
 - o Class sizes
 - o English language (EL) supports
 - o High needs
 - o Prior budget cuts



Key Data by Student Demographics

- Lowell has four schools with percentile scores above the state average.

School Percentile





Renaissance Network

- The Renaissance Network is a strategy to support our underperforming schools.
- Schools receive differentiated services and supports to address achievement and performance gaps.
- Schools are assigned to the network based on DESE accountability percentiles.

Bartlett
Butler
Greenhalge
LHS
Robinson
Stoklosa
Sullivan

Resources to provide this support to schools:

- ☐ Director of Secondary Education (restored/retitled)
- ☐ Principal Mentors (restored)
- ☐ Academic Coaches (grant funded)
- ☐ School Climate Specialist (restored/retitled)
- ☐ Assistant Director of Special Education (restored)



Data Office Supports

By restoring staff, our data office will facilitate access to quality information and build capacity to make data-driven decisions that advance educational equity, opportunity, and achievement for all students. We will be able to:

- Provide quality, relevant, and timely data and reports
- Lead a research agenda that advances educational equity, opportunity, and achievement for all students
- Use data to predict where greater student resources are needed

Resources to provide this support to schools:

- ☐ Director of Research and Accountability
(restored/retitled)
- ☐ Database and Systems Administrator
(restored)



Goal 2: Improve operational efficiency across the system, including increased equity and transparency in district-wide budgeting and school-based resource allocations

Recommended Allocation: \$448,000



Staffing Demographics

Lowell: Staff of Color	Lowell: Students of Color	MA: Staff of Color	MA: Students of Color
6.8%	73.6%	8.1%	41.1%



Diversity Recruitment and Hiring Plan

- Identify barriers to inclusive recruitment, interviewing, hiring and retention
- Ensure compliance with the Voluntary Lau Compliance Plan regarding recruitment and hiring
- Provide interview/hiring teams with training to gain an understanding of diversity and cultural competencies for interviewing and hiring
- Assess where LPS is on an organizational cultural competency spectrum in understanding and having the ability to handle situations, issues, and barriers that can exist at each stage of the recruitment and hiring process
- Develop a training program for future and current diverse teachers and administrators to gain the skills and experience needed for different positions within schools and central office

Resources to provide this support to schools:

- ☐ Asst. Dir. of HR (restored)
- ☐ Human Relations Asst. (new)



Fair Student Funding

- Fair Student Funding provides schools with funding based on the student populations enrolled using a weighted formula method.
- Fair Student Funding (FSF) addresses resource disparities using a more systemic and pre-defined system.
- FSF gives principals the flexibility to tailor resources to their school's needs.
- FSF promotes district conversations on school resource equity.
- It demands that we fund around academic strategies and goals.
- It requires significant change in mindset from rule enforcement to school empowerment.
- FSF will result in schools better serving higher needs populations – such as EL, poverty and/or special needs – and receiving equitable funding and resources needed to educate all children.
- The dollars follow the students.

Resources to provide this support to schools:

- ☐ Deputy Chief Financial Officer
(restored/retitled)
- ☐ External analysis and support (contract)



Strategic Planning Process

- Establish the district's vision, mission, guiding principles and theory of action for increasing district performance using input from district administrators and teachers, students and families, and community stakeholders and partners;
- Establish concrete, measurable goals and targets (three to five years out) for improving student achievement and district-wide performance;
- Prioritize key district initiatives and identify necessary resources to overcome barriers and inequities; and
- Establish accountability metrics for progress monitoring.

Resources to provide this support:

- ☐ External analysis, focus group support (contract)
- ☐ PT Early Learning Coordinator (new)



Goal 3: Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, including the development of proactive security readiness protocols at every school site

Recommended Allocation: \$180,000



ASSESSED NEEDS FOR ENSURING SAFE AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS

- ☐ Improve serviceability of facilities
- ☐ Improve responsiveness to facility needs
- ☐ Document, prioritize, communicate, schedule, and monitor repair needs
- ☐ Support building services employees and ensure materials are available to support success
- ☐ Conduct and monitor training for building services employees
- ☐ Mentor building services employees
- ☐ Implement an evaluation process for building services employees after further negotiations with UTL
- ☐ Schedule monthly inspections of facilities
- ☐ Maintain and monitor safety plans
- ☐ Conduct bi-annual safety reviews of schools
- ☐ Conduct random safety checks

Resources to provide this support to schools:

- ☐ Emergency Management Coordinator (grant)
- ☐ 2 Facility Area Managers (new)



Goal 4: Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process

Recommended Allocation: \$434,000



Recognizing Diversity within the School Community

- 69 Languages Spoken within the District
 - Highest Incident Languages:
 - Khmer, Portuguese, Spanish
- 24% English Learner population compared with 11% statewide
- 731 new enrollments to the district in 2018-19
- Voluntary LAU Compliance Plan in place



Communication and Outreach Plan

- Support families with information to make decisions around school enrollment
 - Ensure all families have access to fully participate in the educational planning and decision-making without linguistic barriers
 - Increase timely and meaningful communication with families utilizing traditional (letters, phone calls, etc.) and new (facebook, twitter, etc) means of communication
- Promote goals, positive initiatives and progress of each school
- Develop and/or strengthen school-site councils and family involvement in district and school policy, budget and program decision-making to promote respectful and welcoming school environments.

Resources to provide this support to schools:

- ☐ 5 Bilingual Family Liaisons (restored)
- ☐ Translation and interpretation services (contract)
- ☐ Community Outreach Strategist (*position will be discussed separately for additional feedback at the community partnership subcommittee prior to posting)



Key Considerations

Community Input

- The largest single investment within this adjustment, totaling \$1,263,728, represents funds added directly to school budgets which will be allocated through a site-based decision-making process that empowers parents, teachers, school leaders and support staff to make budgeting decisions at individual school-sites.
- This adjustment only reflects 1.6% of the total budget and does not change any aspect of the previously approved, community-vetted districtwide budget.

Food Service Payback

- An agreement was established with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education which allows the food service payback to occur over four years at 0% interest.
- While this funding could be used for a lump sum reimbursement of food services, there is no penalty for paying it back over time



Key Considerations

School Committee Funding Priorities from 2018

- This budget adjustment empowers school communities to determine the most meaningful use of the limited funds available
- Over the course of the past year, school-based needs could have shifted and this adjustment recognizes that the people closest to children are best situated to make these decisions through a site-based budgeting process
- The School Committee voted 6-1 to eliminate the priority list on [date]

Added Positions

- Nearly all of the positions within the recommendation are positions that were previously cut during down budget years and are being restored.
- An analysis was conducted of district-wide needs and only positions which create greater efficiency by being located centrally were added as non-school based positions.



Recommendation

To accelerate our efforts to create the best schools in the Commonwealth for the children of Lowell, it is recommended that the School Committee approve the full lump sum budget adjustment for FY20 as presented, including:

1. Approval of an adjustment of the total budget from \$188,908,028 to \$192,528,145, including all recommended expenditures as written in the School Committee packet; and
2. Approval of all relevant position additions as per Policy GCA, including associated job descriptions as written in the School Committee packet.